

~~TOP SECRET~~
MEMORANDUM

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DATE: October 30, 1962

TO: The Vice President

FROM: Colonel Burris

RE: Reconnaissance Activities in Cuba

Instructions have gone out to CINCLANT to suspend quarantine only during the period of U Thant's visit to Cuba which is expected to end Wednesday evening. Reconnaissance flights, as you know, have also been suspended during this period. However, there is apprehension in the Defense Department that the U. S. might submit to Soviet demands that inspection be carried out upon completion of the dismantling process and that U. S. quarantine and reconnaissance be terminated. The traditional Soviet scheme invoked in disarmament discussions is that inspections may be carried out only upon completion of a particular phase. This has never been an acceptable condition, and Defense feels strongly that it should not be accepted in this particular case because of the possibility of compromise and perhaps Soviet duplicity.

The air reconnaissance, therefore, should be resumed immediately upon the departure of U Thant if the Soviets contend that U. N. observers may inspect only the completion of the task. The requirement to continue the reconnaissance becomes more imperative if the Soviets maintain their insistence upon Red Cross personnel who, in the first place, might lack certain qualifications to make desired technical inspections, and, in the second place, would in a sense be an extra-U. N. body carrying out U. N. functions.

It is essential, therefore, that reconnaissance be resumed upon the departure of U Thant and that the Soviets be made fully aware of U. S. intentions to carry out these measures until operating on-site inspections are effective. Further, the U. S. should insist that representatives of the United Nations itself, rather than an unrelated body like the Red Cross, be responsible for supervising the dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles.

Since the subject of disarmament is bound to receive increasing attention in forthcoming months, it would be well to use this occasion to challenge this traditional Soviet roadblock on inspection. Such a challenge, in all probability, will not affect the current phase of the Cuban operation in the final analysis.

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Authority Att 3-7-78, OSD 5-15-78, NSC
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